

Camp at AVG by Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati
From December 14 to 18, 2019

Value of Values Part 02 *(Continued from March 2020)*

Moksha is the privilege only of the human beings. Freedom is the result of right choices. When choice is there, you can also make wrong choice and make your life miserable. Liberation is the privilege that only human being enjoys as the most evolved being. Other creatures will remain as they are. Humans born as human being and dies as dog or god; choices are there, that's why this teaching. Values are like the guidelines to make the right choices. So, you can start creating happiness for yourself. By following values as I am not obliging anybody, I am just helping myself by following the order. All conflicts are created by values which are part of universal order. Conflicts are because of values. Conflict means stress, one part of me rejecting the other part. If we do not do something about self-dissatisfaction, self-rejection and self-condemnation, these conflicts can build up leading to big depression and all other mental problems.

Why do I reject myself when I do not like myself? Why do I not like myself because I have expectations of myself all the time. Not only I have expectations from others, I also have same expectations of myself on how I should treat others. I am happy with myself whenever I conduct myself in a kind and compassionate manner. That's why as Pujya Swamiji said: "Transform yourself from being a consumer to a contributor". When I fail, I disapprove of myself; I am the worst critic of myself; a constant judgment is going on what I did is right or wrong. I judge myself based on the values; expectations and values become the basis of judgment. When I fail those expectations, I am strict with myself. When I hurt, cheat or tell a lie, I violate values. Whenever I violate values, I disapprove of myself. That's what creates conflict. It is created because I have strict expectations of myself. I am stricter to myself than anyone else. That's why always seeking approval is a biggest problem for everyone.

We seek approval from significant people in our life. Self-judging and self-evaluation is continuously going on; that is where I have to pay attention.

Why do I want myself to be truthful and kind? That is where I am in harmony with myself; I am happy with myself. When I find myself telling lie, I am at conflict with the self. It doesn't come from outside; it comes from myself. I am a self-conscious being; a judgmental being always makes judgments. Buddhi, the judging mode of the mind, judges whatever it comes in contact with. The nature of our intellect is to judge. In every interaction, I first judge and then I decide my interaction. First, I am judging myself before I judge others. All of these are given to us, so that we become liberated, but the same thing binds us in order to remain acceptable to myself by conducting myself in a manner where I approve of myself. It is as simple as that. How do I avoid self-deception by knowing values? Bhagavad Gita says that grief and delusion are the fundamental human problem. Nothing will solve the problem of grief and stress unless we understand this. More we understand all these mechanism within us, more appreciation we will have. That's why we need to understand the value of values.

These values basically come from our own self, as they represent universal harmony and universal order. They are all based on our nature. When we follow these values, we act in harmony with our own self and there is harmony within self. When we violate these values, we are going against our self, creating disharmony within ourselves. Love of the self is natural; that's why we love these values. We are born with love for these values. When I am able to follow them, I feel good about myself, and we also want others to follow them. If this is so important, then why do we see so much violation of values? Why do I violate them? By telling lies, cheating, pretending and hurting, we act against our own nature, even though we love our nature and these values, and also love other when they follow values. Still why do we find ourselves going against these values?

There are two sets of values in our life: Natural values and Universal values. We are born with these values and we are aware of them. Given the choice, I always want to follow these values. Everybody wants to behave in a honest, loving and kind manner. Nobody deliberately violates these values willfully. The person is compelled to violate the value. In third chapter, Arjuna asks this question. Why do people commit sins? Impelled by what, does a person violate the values? Why does a person conduct himself in such a manner? What impels him to violate, to hurt; impelled by what?

kena prayuktaḥ. Arjuna meant to say that compels the person, impels the person to undertake a behavior which is unbecoming, *anicchinnaṇi vārṣṇeya* – even though it is not desired. A person does not want to tell a lie, hurt, or be cruel but like an owner compels the servant whether he likes it or not. *Balāt niyojitaḥ*. As a master can compel a servant to do things against his own will, similarly, what is it that compels me to act against my nature? This shows a great insight that a person violate values by compulsion. There is a famous statement, attributed to Duryodhana –

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानामि अधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः

jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛttiḥ jānāmi adharmaṁ na ca me nivṛttiḥ.

I know what is righteous but cannot adapt. I know what is unrighteous but am not able to avoid it. He finds himself helpless and cannot refrain from doing what is wrong. Is he free or is he bound? On the one hand, he is free to do whatever he wants to do. Even though outwardly he displays this kind of attitude, does that really reflect his freedom? Does he really want to do that, or he is compelled to do that. That is a very important question.

Freedom is that I am able to act according to my free will; that is what the freedom is. Among all the beings, it is only human being endowed with free will and act; no one else can do this. If humans are not there, everything will be in perfect harmony. Only humans can violate and hurt other beings because we are given free will. It gives me freedom to abuse the order of nature. Traffic law says, “wear helmet”; it’s my life and I don’t want to wear it. There is this compulsion within ourselves, that comes from the second set of values.

Certain things are very valuable to me as per the society that I am born and raised in. Material values, wealth, power, fame etc. are valued by everybody. It is unfortunate that these are valued everywhere. We give values to these material achievements because of the lack of understanding of fundamentals of life, of ourselves. It is because of the wrong perception of ourselves and of the world. True perception of myself is that I am a happy being. We keep doing one activity after the other because the mind is not at ease with itself. My conclusion is that I am not all right as I am; so if I become wealthy, I am all right; if I get power, I can be happy; If I become famous, I can be happy. This is what we find the whole world valuing. As said in Tattvabodha – *ihāmutrārthaphalabhogavirāgaḥ* - dispassion for the ob-

jects of enjoyment in this world and the other.

I need to be wealthy, famous and powerful because that is what world respects. Even in temple also, I have to be in a long line, and some politician - wealthy person gets priorities. So wealth, power and fame are esteemed. I want to be successful also. So, my idea of success is shaped by the world; it has always been like this. Materialism is seeing success in this material accomplishment. It comes from total lack of understanding about myself not realizing that success is my nature. By becoming wealthy or famous or powerful, what am I seeking? Nobody seeks wealth for the sake of wealth; everybody seeks it for *ātmasukham*. Everyone wants to be a pleased self. What I always love is a pleased self. That is called real success; a pleased self is a success. Whatever I want is always for pleased self. Wealth, fame and power make me pleased, so they become important for me. As I am raised in the society, I automatically acquire these values, not knowing that pleased self is my nature and not dependent on all the acquisitions. How the whole world praises wealthy and successful people, and I want to be successful, to be praised and those things become important for me.

Values like truth, non-violence etc., about which we are aware and we naturally love, but do not know why we love them, that clarity is not there. I do not associate kindness and truthfulness with success. I associate wealth etc. with success. There arises a situation where we have to make a choice between honesty and money, and there comes the conflict. By telling the truth, I may lose this much money; I will be exposed; my fame, wealth, position is at stake; my job is at stake. Thus, very often life puts us in a difficult situation where whether be honest and following value or be in conflict with the core values. We find that we cannot practice both of them, either be honest or be wealthy. Whenever we find headlines in newspaper on people's honesty, there are headlines on people's material gains, etc. The Value of the wealth is the assimilated value. I don't know what I seek to gain by being truthful. We have concluded that if you are more honest, then you will be left behind. Smarter you are, you go ahead in life. These universal values, natural values are not recognized values as the wealth etc. are recognized; assimilated values over unassimilated values in the words of Pujya Swamiji. One is compelled to be dishonest. If the situation arises that I tend to lose something dear to me; I compromise on values. That's why the conflict is;

otherwise, I am always honest. No one tells lie for the sake of telling a lie. The Kauravas were more powerful and successful. The Pandavas were falling behind in term of those visible strengths. The point that we want to make is that whenever a person violates value, it is not out of not understanding; it is out of compulsion. When that compulsion is not there, the person is a saint. When those conflicts come, these values are compromised. I am saying this so we understand that towards corrupt and dishonest people, we should be more sympathetic. They are helpless; they appear powerful outwardly, but as far as their inner condition is concerned, they are affected by insecurity, jealous, fear and other such negative tendencies against their own nature which they are going to regret.

As Lord Krishna says - *kāma eṣaḥ krodha eṣaḥ*, it is craving that turn into anger that compels a person. People are helpless; outwardly they look very powerful, but inwardly very weak. We should understand their helplessness and be more sympathetic to them. Even though human being loves to be kind and non-violent, he still acts in contradiction to what he likes himself to be.

There are two conflicting values in our life. Today a young man thinks that you can go ahead only if you violate values; that is not true, except it might require more hard work and creativity to achieve what others are achieving easily. These conflicting values are there and that's why conflict; otherwise, the whole world would have been heaven. We love the saints; we don't love evil people. How these values are valuable that we need to understand. I may not value outer success for what they are; I value them for pleased self. If this is clear, easier it becomes for us to hold on to our values. Less clear this is, more we become controlled by these passions. If these things are not resolved in our mind and not assimilated unfortunately, we become prey to these compulsions.

When a Swami passes through customs trying to save custom duties, one part of his mind tells him to just tell a lie, nothing to declare; then other side tells him to tell the truth. If you allow the mind, it will compel you to make wrong choices. You must realize why we violate the values. Those universal values are the means for the pleased self. What will please me is our own perception of ourselves to consider worthy based on these achievements. No joy when I get promotion or raise. I got two raise, my colleague got four

raise; that makes me unhappy. It is my perception of myself that makes me unhappy.

The text begins now.

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ १३-८॥

amānitvam adambhitvam ahiṁsā kṣāntirārjavam

ācāryopāśanam śaucaṁ sthairyam ātmavinigrahaḥ 13-8

Value: 1 – *amānitvam*

amānitvam is translated as humility, absence of *mānitva*. The state of being a *māni* is called *amānitvam*. What is *māni*? One who possess *māna* – pride is called a *māni*, *ātmanah ślāghanam* - exaggerated view about myself, exaggerated view about my glory, my greatness. *Amānitvam* can be translated as absence of pride, humility. Lord Krishna begins with this value. Every human being has this pride. Humans are proud person, self-conceited beings. Person is proud because he has some qualification - I am learned, I am handsome, I have name, fame, power, accomplishment in life. They are overvalued by me, exaggerated in my own estimate. We value ourselves based on what we possess. I think I am great because of my wealth power, knowledge etc. There is a need on my part to be great. In my own perception, I feel good about myself. The basic need is to feel good about myself.

When do I feel good? When I am great in my own perception, I feel good. Society says a wealthy person, learned person, famous person is a great person; therefore I think I am great when I am all that. This is what I have picked up from the world around me, the idea of greatness. I want to be great is a genuine desire. We should not condemn the need to be great. But what makes me great? That's where the problem comes. Wealth, name, fame, power etc. gain importance or value in my life. But then it does not stop there; a proud problem has an inherent problem within oneself. I want to be great but I don't think I am great. I feel great when you say I am great. We have some significant people in our life and we keep seeking their approval. As I don't approve myself, there is a need to get approval from others. So I need to present in a manner to get approval, respect and validation from others that I am great. I want them to declare that I am great, respectable, learned etc. How do I know it? When they respect, then I know

that I am respectable. I basically have difficulty in accepting myself as I am, so I have these strong needs to earn respect from others, and then I feel good about myself.

Basic need is to feel good about myself. I think I'm something, but you tell me that I am something. I respect myself only when other people tell me that I am respectable. How do I know that you respect me? That is my inference, you smile at me or you laugh at me? What should be the extent of smile - what should be your gesture - mind is always calculating. All the time my feeling good about myself is based on what you see. Some people might not be generous in their expressions. People are not very generous in acknowledging. They may respect me but I have my own notion of what is being respected, and if I feel that I am not respected as per my requirements, that affects me. My feeling good about myself simply depends upon others. The need of being respected by others is the problem; *kāma eṣaḥ krodha eṣaḥ*. *Mānitvam* is a strong need for being respected. People don't always have time for you and your needs. They also need respect from you. I must keep you happy in order to that you keep me happy. *Mānitvam* is seeking respect, a deep need for being respected in the manner in which I think you should respect me.

That craving, that need, the need of being respected must be strongest, so Lord Krishna puts it first. More intellectual you are, the more egoist you are. More inflated the ego I have, stronger is my need of acknowledgement from others. Need for *Kāma* is, when the acknowledgement come from the pleased self I seek from others. Mind is a constant battle field; who did what to me, that's all I think about. My mind is going on what they did to me and what I am going to do to them when I get opportunity. When we have mind like that, that mind is not conducive for knowing Brahman; it is an expression of strong bondage, ignorance. *Mānitvam* is a strong expression of ignorance. For the egoistic people, it is a strong need. That's why Lord Krishna starts with it.

We will continue how these values are to be followed.

Being conscious of our mind, what kinds of thoughts are arising in our mind recognizing the thought of *mānitvam*. Recognize that thought. This is sure of unhappiness, bondage, misery. Value for becoming free from that

state of mind.

Having recognized how it makes me miserable, value for getting freedom from pride or *mānitvam*. How to become free?

Pratipakṣabhāvanā - *Bhāvanā* means attitude, a deliberately taking opposite positions. I deliberately take opposite position to neutralize *mānitvam*. I must see the mechanism of certain *mānitvam* thoughts, reverse and neutralize them. That's how the mind becomes free from *mānitvam*.

- Transcribed by Sri Manoj Kitta , Edited by Sharanji

To be continued.....

